United Nations A/53/PV.98

General Assembly

Official Records

Fifty-third Session

98th plenary meeting
Friday, 23 April 1999, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Opertti ..... (Uruguay)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Tribute to the memory of His Excellency Mr. Ibrahim Baré Maïnassara, late President of the Republic of the Niger

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): This morning, it is my sad duty to pay tribute to the memory of the late President of the Republic of the Niger, His Excellency Mr. Ibrahim Baré Maïnassara, who passed away on 9 April 1999.

On behalf of the General Assembly, I request the representative of the Niger to convey our condolences to the Government and the people of the Niger and to the bereaved family of His Excellency Mr. Ibrahim Baré Maïnassara.

I invite representatives to stand and observe a minute of silence in tribute to the memory of His Excellency Mr. Ibrahim Baré Maïnassara.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silence.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I call on the representative of the Niger.

Mr. Tankoano (Niger) (*spoke in French*): A painful event occurred on Friday, 9 April 1999, with the tragic death of President Ibrahim Baré Maïnassara. I am deeply touched by the tribute that has just been paid to his memory by the General Assembly and I thank you, Sir, on behalf of the Government and the people of the Niger.

As the Assembly is aware, following the tragic passing of the President of the Republic, the Niger armed forces, in a burst of national spirit, decided to take the reins of power by establishing a Council of National Reconciliation. This new presence of the army on my country's political scene was intended to spare the Niger and its people the major repercussions of the political stalemate towards which they had been inexorably headed. I therefore wish to express here the adherence of the entire population of the Niger, the political class and civil society to this new beginning for the reconciliation of our hearts and minds.

I can also confirm the full resolve of the Council of National Reconciliation and its firm commitment to observing a transitional period of nine months in order to lay the lasting foundations of a genuine and irreversible return to democracy in the Niger. This transition is headed by a Government of broad-based national unity established on 16 April 1999.

The objectives of the new authorities in the Niger are to pursue the democratic process, to restore civilian government on 1 January 2000 and to respect fundamental freedoms, human rights and the international commitments already undertaken by my country. The plan for a return to normal constitutional life has been established as follows: adoption of the constitution by referendum in June 1999; legislative and presidential

99-85306 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

elections in November 1999; and inauguration of the President Elect on 31 December 1999.

Every provision has already been made for the establishment of a body entrusted with drafting the basic texts of the Republic: the constitution and the electoral code. I also wish to draw attention to the decision of the Council of National Reconciliation on the ineligibility of its members and those of the Government and the defence and security forces in elections during the transition period.

At this difficult time, I solemnly appeal to all the Niger's partners and friends to provide my country with all the support it needs to make the transition set down by the Council of National Reconciliation a success.

Agenda item 118 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/53/835/Add.4)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In a letter contained in document A/53/835/Add.4, the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that, since the issuance of his communications contained in document A/53/835 and addenda 1 to 3, Afghanistan and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines have made the necessary payments to reduce their arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of this information?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

Adoption of the agenda of the fifty-third session of the General Assembly, allocation of items and organization of work

Request for the inclusion of an additional sub-item submitted by the Secretary-General

Note by the Secretary-General (A/53/237)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We shall now address a request contained in a note by the Secretary-General, circulated in document A/53/237, relating to the confirmation of the appointment of the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme.

In his note, the Secretary-General informs the General Assembly that he has accepted, with regret, the resignation of Mr. James Gustave Speth as Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme effective 1 July 1999.

The Secretary-General also informs the Assembly that, pursuant to the established procedure, it will be required, at its current session, to confirm the appointment of the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme.

Inasmuch as item 17 of the agenda of the fifty-third session, entitled "Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments", does not include a sub-item relating to such a confirmation, it is proposed to include in the agenda of the fifty-third session, under agenda item 17, an additional sub-item entitled "Confirmation of the appointment of the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme".

Unless there is an objection, I shall take it that the General Assembly agrees that, under the circumstances described in the note by the Secretary-General, the provision of rule 40 of the rules of procedure which would require a meeting of the General Committee on the question of the inclusion of an additional sub-item should be waived.

May I take it that the General Assembly, on the proposal of the Secretary-General, wishes to include in the agenda of its fifty-third session an additional sub-item of agenda item 17, entitled "Confirmation of the appointment of the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme"?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): This additional sub-item becomes sub-item (l) of agenda item 17.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to consider this sub-item directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I should now like to consult delegations with regard to proceeding

immediately to the consideration of sub-item (l) of agenda item 17. In this connection, I should like to draw the Assembly's attention to the relevant provision of rule 15 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, which reads as follows:

> "No additional item may, unless the General Assembly decides otherwise by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting, be considered until seven days have elapsed since it was placed on the agenda and until a committee has reported upon the question concerned".

In the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Assembly agrees to proceed immediately to the consideration of sub-item (l) of agenda item 17.

It was so decided.

Agenda item 17 (*continued*)

Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments

(l) Confirmation of the appointment of the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme

Note by the Secretary-General (A/53/237)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In his note contained in document A/53/237, the Secretary-General reminds members that, in paragraph 22 of part B of its resolution 1240 (XIII) of 14 October 1958 on the establishment of the Special Fund, the General Assembly provided that the Secretary-General, after having consulted the Governing Council of the Special Fund, would appoint the Managing Director, subject to confirmation by the Assembly. This procedure has been construed as applying also to the appointment of the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme.

By its decision 51/321 of 21 May 1997, the General Assembly confirmed the appointment by the Secretary-General of Mr. James Gustave Speth as Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme for a four-year term of office beginning on 16 July 1997.

Mr. James Gustave Speth has informed the Secretary-General of his intention to resign effective 1 July 1999 and the Secretary-General has agreed, with regret, to accept his resignation.

Following consultations with members of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, the Secretary-General now requests the General Assembly to confirm the appointment of Mr. Mark Mallock Brown as Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme for a four-year term of office beginning on 1 July 1999.

May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to confirm the appointment by the Secretary-General of Mr. Mark Mallock Brown as Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme for a four-year term of office beginning on 1 July 1999?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have thus concluded our consideration of sub-item (l) of agenda item 17.

Agenda item 93 (*continued*)

Sustainable development and international economic cooperation

(f) Implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development

Letter from the Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly (A/53/902)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I have been informed that consultations are continuing on the request contained in the letter from the Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly, document A/53/902. Consideration of this request is therefore postponed to a later date to be announced.

The meeting rose at 10.35 a.m.